



NATIONAL EDUCATION GOALS PANEL

NEWS RELEASE
For Immediate Release

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EDUCATORS, RESEARCHERS SHARE SUCCESS STORIES FOR NATIONAL INVESTIGATION OF PROMISING PRACTICES IN EDUCATION

National Education Goals Panel Convenes First of Four Field Hearings to Explore Success in Helping Minority and Urban Students Achieve High Standards

LOS ANGELES – (May 22, 2000) – A bilingual education program that engages the business community and raises the level of student achievement for both native and non-native speakers of English. A magnet school that embraces its diverse community and involves parents in their students' learning. The message is clear: there are places where standards-based education reform can and does work. This was what the National Education Goals Panel heard today from educators, researchers and business leaders who have a wide range of examples of minority and urban students successfully achieving high academic standards.

“We saw today that minority and urban students are meeting challenging standards,” said Wisconsin Governor and Panel Chair Tommy Thompson (R). “We heard evidence of real programs that really work and empower all students to achieve.”

Today's field hearing was the first of four to be held nationwide as part of a yearlong exploration into promising practices in education reform. Presenters focused on research and programs that successfully raise academic achievement among minority, urban and non-native English speaking students. The success of these efforts belies the notion that urban and minority students cannot reach high standards. The evidence gathered in this and later field hearings will be published in a report later this year.

U.S. Representative Matthew Martinez (D-CA, 31st), who co-hosted the hearing with Governor Thompson, was excited by the breadth and depth of the programs and research presented. “I saw today that standards-based education reform is working in communities right here in the Los Angeles area. But it takes more than politicians – it takes business leaders, educators, parents and communities.”

Evidence of this approach was presented by Gail Calhoun, director of the APPLES program at Valleydale Elementary School in Azusa Unified School District in California. The APPLES (Achieving Progress and Proficiency for Limited English Speakers) program provides bilingual education in English and Spanish for all students, both native and non-native English speakers. Today, test scores for the entire school population have increased in both English and Spanish subject areas. Partnerships with the local business community have provided activities and other resources for students. Parents also get in on the act, enrolling in adult English or Spanish as a Second Language classes at the school.

A similar inclusive atmosphere is also in place at Vaughn Learning Center, the first independent public charter school in the Los Angeles Unified School District. Located in a high poverty, high crime area, Vaughn provides its students with a challenging, safe environment where they can excel. Yvonne Chan, the principal at Vaughn, spoke of her school as a place that focuses on standards, accountability and excellence. At Vaughn, all English learners receive instruction in English by the third grade, and special education students are fully included throughout the day. The school also provides a Family Center that collaborates with other agencies to form a “safety net” for children and their families. In 1996, Vaughn was awarded the National Blue Ribbon School award.

John Stevens, Executive Director of the Texas Business and Education Coalition (TBEC), underscored the critical role businesses can play in improving education. Stevens shared how business coalitions in both North Carolina and Texas successfully lobbied for tougher accountability systems and statewide education policy reforms. The result of this lobbying, according to a major Goals Panel study, helped contribute to the rapid improvements among urban and minority students in Texas and North Carolina. Joan Herman of the National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing (CRESST) at UCLA presented information on current trends in minority and urban achievement in California.

“The data is there – standards-based reform can work, and we encourage communities nationwide to consider replicating these successful programs,” said Ken Nelson, executive director of the Panel. “Now we have real-world examples. We launched these field hearings to help others learn from these examples of promising practices in action.”

The Goals Panel 2000 Agenda

Today’s field hearing is part of a yearlong initiative entitled “High Achieving Schools: The Promise, The Practice, The Results” that will focus on standards-based reform. The initiative began in April with a national teleconference on Baldrige criteria and the application of other business practices in education. Other highlights of the National Education Goals Panel agenda for 2000 include:

- Three other regional hearings in Vermont (June 1), Atlanta (September 19) and Chicago (October) that will examine issues key to achieving high standards for all students;
- The formation of the Measuring Success Task Force, led by former Maine Gov. John “Jock” McKernan, that will make recommendations on data needed to encourage reform; and
- A final National Teleconference in December that will engage the nation by clarifying what has been learned and will empower educators to build consensus around promising practices.

About the National Education Goals Panel

Created in July 1990, the National Education Goals Panel is a bipartisan body of federal and state officials made up of eight governors, four members of Congress, four state legislators and two members appointed by the president. To learn more about the Goals Panel, please visit www.negp.gov. The eight National Education Goals call for greater levels of: student achievement and citizenship; high school completion; teacher education and professional development; parental participation in the schools; literacy and lifelong learning; and safe, disciplined, and alcohol-and-drug-free schools. The Goals also call for all children to be ready to learn by the time they start school and for US students to be first in the world in mathematics and science achievement.

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